

Report regarding: **Risk Breakout Session; Thursday, January 20, 10:30-5:30 PM; 2011 PMOC Annual Meeting; Washington, DC**

To: FTA, John Bell

From: David Sillars, Sillars Consulting; Mike Wetherell, Urban Engineers (co-hosts)

The Risk Breakout Session at the 2011 PMOC Annual Meeting was attended primarily by risk managers working for or in consultation with the various PMOCs, by FTA personnel, and other interested parties. Thirty-one such individuals attended the meeting; an attendance list is attached to this report; David Sillars and Mike Wetherell presided over the meeting.

The subjects planned for discussion were:

- **The grantee/PMOC roles in project risk management**
- **OP-40 mechanics:**
 - Project status evaluation: characterizing or baselining the project
 - Identification and Categorization of Risks – Risk Register
 - Risk Assessment
 - Risk Mitigation

----the following items were scheduled, but not discussed due to time constraints----

- **OP-40 management:**
 - Development of Grantee's Risk and Contingency Management Plan (RCMP)
 - Risk review report
 - PMOC's Monitoring of Grantee's Risk and Contingency Management Plan
- **Organizing the risk review (to be presented by Hill International)**

Due to time constraints, only the first two major categories of the planned agenda (grantee/PMOC roles and OP-40 mechanics) were discussed. The attendees included those with significant experience in delivering the processes prescribed in OP40, as well as those with no or some experience. The discussion for each of the sections included 1) an introduction to the operational guidance, 2) a discussion of the practical applications, and 3) roundtable discussion of experience using the guidance.

Discussions may be characterized as engaging, with many experienced PMOCs providing examples of use of the guidance on actual projects, especially conditions in which the PMOC had developed working practices or enhancements to fit project specifics. The depth of these discussions was valuable, and was the primary reason that all agenda items were not discussed. Examples of this open discussion include: methods to approach project sponsors to alleviate

sponsor concerns over issues such as sharing of information or developing an FTA roadmap, and lessons-learned techniques to manage under alternative project forms, such as design-build. Less-experienced PMOC risk managers often asked questions to provide clarification.

Specific items of note or requested future action included:

- Request for development of a “checklist” of typical and potential risks by phase of project, although some concern was expressed that such a list may limit creative discovery of risks;
- Request for a repository of model reports (from actual projects) and other documents that a lesser experienced PMOC may access to complete its work (note, FTA indicated this would require examining the sensitivity of distributing project specific information);
- Development of a procedure for control of sponsor-provided information; it was noted that there is some similar guidance provided in other OPs, especially the OP3Xs;
- Development of a simplified OP40 (called “OP40-EZ” in the meeting) that can be used for smaller projects (very small starts, BRTs, etc.);
- Development of direction for evaluating a sponsor-developed “bottom-up” risk assessment, since sponsors are encouraged to perform their own risk assessment and may use this method;
- Review of whether there should be a separate risk category to segregate technical from management risk;
- A specific request to revise the restrictive language in OP40 6.4.2.4 that includes a tightly-prescribed definition of “critical path”; and
- Review of the FTA “Targets” for the total contingency and secondary mitigation in the OP40, particularly for the Entry into PE Phase.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM. Ideas for continuation of the meeting to cover undiscussed agenda items included continuation at the annual Engineer’s Meeting in Boston in June, or potentially as a webinar.

FTA PMOC MTG 2011
Risk Mgr Workshop

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